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Wickersham, George Woodward

The League of Nations and labor

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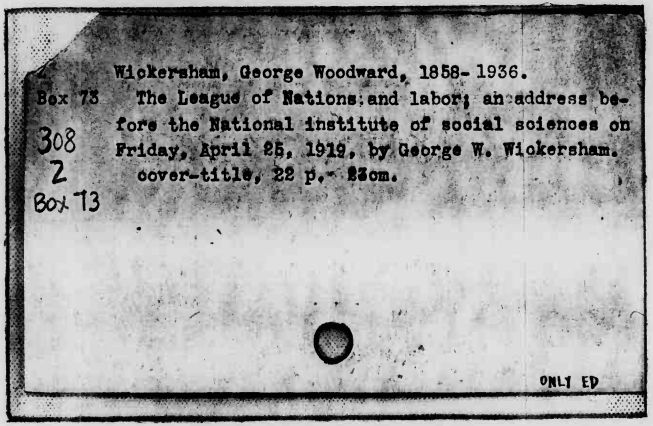
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THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND LABOR

AN ADDRESS BEFORE THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES ON FRIDAY, APRIL 25, 1919

BY

GEORGE W. WICKERSHAM

28 March, 1920 - L.R.W.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND LABOR.

I am to speak to you to-night on one phase of the League of Nations which has not been so much discussed as many other phases, namely: the provisions affecting labor.

Almost exactly a century ago, in October, 1818, Robert Owen, an idealistic and practical Scotch manufacturer, addressed a memorial to the representatives of the powers which had united in the overthrow of Napoleon, then sitting at Aix-la-Chapelle, in which he said:

> "That the period is arrived when the means are become obvious by which, without force or fraud, or disorder of any kind, riches may be created in such abundance and so advantageously for all, that the wants and desires of every human being may be satisfied."

And, he added:

> "It is the grand interest of society to adopt practical measures by which the largest amount of useful and valuable productions may be obtained at the least expense of manual labor and with the most comfort to the producers."

Strange to relate, that invitation not only was declined by the statesmen gathered at Aix-la-Chapelle, but it received no recognition whatever from them. Yet, despite the Utopian nature of this alluring picture, Owen was no mere visionary. He was able to point to a very practical success in the application of his theories in his model establishment at New Lamark. What he

had there accomplished well justified his confidence in the practical benefits to the world which the extension of his system would have secured. But the time for its favorable reception by the governments of Europe had not yet arrived.

The Czar Alexander's dream of a world league of nations already was fading away; the treaty of Chaumont, with its idealism, had been merged into the practical Alliance of 1815, between the sovereigns of Russia, Austria, Prussia and England. Castlereagh's distrust of a general union of large and small powers had found expression in a memorandum stating:

> "The problem of a universal alliance for the peace and happiness of the world has always been one of speculation and hope. But it has never yet been reduced to practice, and if an opinion may be hazarded from its difficulty it never can."

The conferees at Aix-la-Chapelle were absorbed in the consideration of political problems of a dynastic nature. They were not in the least interested in the conditions under which men, women and children in the different countries were compelled to toil for their daily bread. They displayed even less interest in the proposals of Robert Owen than did the British Parliament when, in June, 1815, he caused a bill to be introduced providing

> "for the preservation of the health and morals of apprentices and others in cotton mills."

This measure was to be applicable to all mills in which twenty or more persons were employed. It forbad the employment of children under ten years of age, limited the period of work for all persons under eighteen to

ten and one-half hours per day, exclusive of one-half hour's instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, and forbad all such persons working between the hours of nine p. m. and eight a. m. During the first four years of their service, employees under eighteen years of age were also to be instructed in the elementary subjects mentioned for half an hour every day, at the expense of the employer.

The proposed measure was dismissed by the Committee of the House of Commons as revolutionary, impracticable and utterly wanting in common sense. But the inherent social justice embodied in its moderate provisions slowly but surely won aid and progress in England and it proved to be the precursor of an ever widening programme of governmental regulations for the protection and betterment of the working peoples of Great Britain.

It would far exceed the limitations of this occasion to attempt to trace the history of international efforts in the same direction. Every measure adopted for the benefit of the workers in one country more or less has affected conditions in other countries. High wages and opportunity for advancement in America served to stimulate immigration from countries where conditions were less favorable, and the great influx of cheap labor from Europe operated to keep down wages and retard improvements in conditions under which men, women and children were employed in industry in the new world. These conditions stimulated the formation of organizations of workers, and the resultant struggle for improved conditions developed and intensified a class consciousness both here and abroad. Meantime, various international associations were formed for the consideration of questions especially affecting indus-

trial workers, which held meetings and congresses for the exchange of views and the formation of opinions which should influence governmental action. The Socialist *Internationale* was one type of such organization, the Trades Unions another. International conferences on social insurance and on unemployment also were held, and in 1900, the International Association for Labor Legislation was organized in Paris by a group of statesmen, economists and professional men, whch now has a membership representing twenty-five countries. In 1901, that association set up an International Labor Office at Basle, towards the support of which fourteen governments have contributed. It was through the labors of this organization in studying and ascertaining the effect upon the health of women and children of the use of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches, and the conference to consider that subject, held by it at Basle in 1904, that a treaty was secured among the principal European nations, and legislation by the Congress of the United States, which, in effect, prohibited the use of that deleterious substance. International governmental conferences respecting labor questions practically began with the conference held at the instance of William II at Berlin in 1890, at which fourteen governments were represented—a conference which, however, took no action beyond the adoption of a few resolutions. Between 1882 and 1914, some thirty agreements between governments were made, some of them extending to alien workmen the advantages and safeguards of industrial legislation in the countries where they were employed, and some providing for the adoption of a common labor standard in two or more countries. Just before the war, in 1912, the conference held at Zurich, under the auspices of the International Association for Labor Legislation, called attention to the necessity for international action in dealing with such subjects as the administration of international labor treaties and labor laws, child labor, relations between employers and workmen, the regulation of home work, hours of labor in continuous industries, the protection of workmen from accident and industrial disease, workmen's holidays, and the length of the working day.

A few months after the outbreak of the war (February 14, 1915), an interallied labor and socialist conference was held in London, at which resolutions were adopted dealing with the conditions of peace, including the recommendation of a league or association of nations for its preservation. Similar meetings for like purposes were held in May and July, 1916, in February and August, 1917, and in February, 1918. At almost all of these conferences, resolutions were adopted recommending specific provisions in the peace treaty, when it should be made, including particularly the right of small nations to self-determination, limitation of armaments and the abolition of secret diplomacy. The labor standards recommended for all nations by these various conferences, almost uniformly included such subjects as the protection of women and children, social insurance, prohibition of night work, the eight-hour day, and safe and sanitary working conditions. Some of those provisions which Mr. Wilson embodied in his fourteen points, were formulated and recommended by one or the other of these conferences months before the delivery of his address to the Congress of January 8, 1918.

The most detailed and specific statement of the Allied war aims was embodied in a memorandum originally presented to the Interallied Labor and Socialist Confer-

ence in London in August, 1917, and, after revision, approved by the National Committees of the Labor Party in January, and by the labor representatives of the Allied nations in February, 1918, and presented to the Prime Minister as the opinion of the organized workers of Great Britain.

> "Whatever may have been the objects for which the war was begun," sets forth this memorandum, "the fundamental purpose of the inter-allied conference in supporting the continuance of the struggle is that the world may henceforth be made safe for democracy. * * * Whoever triumphs, the peoples will have lost, unless an international system is established which will prevent war."

This end was proposed to be secured through the authority of a League of Nations. The memorandum contemplates the creation of a supersovereignty over the existing nations, international legislation, compulsory arbitration, the abolition of compulsory military service, disarmament, governmental control of private munitions manufactories, and it declares that the League of Nations must be included in the peace treaty. It further urges an agreement

> "for the enforcement in all countries of legislation on factory conditions, a maximum eight-hour day, and prevention of sweating and unhealthy trades necessary to protect the workers against exploitation and oppression and the prohibition of night work for women and children."

It further emphasizes the duty of the governments to provide against unemployment resulting from the discharge of the very large number of men which would follow after the treaty of peace.

Almost all of these plans proposed by the various labor conferences advocate a League of Nations for the purpose of securing the application to all the countries uniting in the treaty, of the programme of international and industrial labor standards and conditions recommended.

The League of Nations proposed to be organized under the Paris Covenant does not, however, follow the lines of these recommendations. It provides, not for a supernational state, but for an alliance of separate sovereignties for the preservation of the peace of the world. The Covenant recommended grew out of the fourteenth point in the President's peace programme of January 8, 1918. That point was an essential part of the programme which embraced the evacuation by the enemy powers of occupied territory, the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France, a readjustment of the frontiers of Italy, the opening of the Dardanelles to the commerce of all nations, and the erection of a new and independent Polish State. These territorial readjustments naturally required security for their preservation. The fourteenth point provided for this in the following language:

> "A general association of nations must be formed under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike."

In his Mt. Vernon speech of July 4, 1918, the President's thought found a somewhat broader expression in the inclusion of the following among the statement of peace aims:

> "The establishment of an organization of peace, which shall make it certain that the com-

bined power of free nations will check every invasion of right and serve to make peace and justice the more secure by affording a definite tribunal of opinion to which all must submit and by which every international readjustment that cannot be amicably agreed upon by the peoples directly concerned shall be sanctioned."

The Peace Conference, on January 25, 1919, adopted resolutions declaring it to be essential to the maintenance of the world settlement which the associated nations were met to establish,

> "that a League of Nations be created to promote international obligations and to provide safeguards against war,"—

a league which should be an integral part of the general treaty of peace and should be open to every civilized nation which could be relied upon to promote its objects.

Speaking in support of those resolutions, Mr. Wilson said that the United States should feel that its part in the war would be played in vain if there ensued upon it abortive European settlements.

> "It would feel that it could not take part in guaranteeing those European settlements unless that guarantee involved the continuous superintendence of the peace of the world by the associated nations of the world."

The dominant thought in both the resolutions and the address was, that the territorial settlements about to be made must be protected by an association of the powers. A few days later (February 3d) in the French Chamber of Deputies, the President thus referred to the proposed League:

> "The nations of the world are about to consummate a brotherhood which will make it unnecessary in the future to maintain those crushing armaments which make the people suffer almost as much in peace as they did in war."

Quite logically, therefore, the preamble to the Covenant reported to the Conference on February 14th, recited the purposes of the Constitution of the League to be

> "to promote international cooperation and to secure international peace and security * * *."

These objects, it was recited, were to be accomplished by open dealings among the nations, by the establishment of international law as the actual rule of conduct among governments, and by the maintenance of justice and a scrupulous respect for all treaty obligations in international dealings.

But a place was found in the body of the agreement for certain provisions regarding labor, and provisions concerning commerce. These provisions are not directly requisite to the attainment of the objects recited in the preamble, but they have a material bearing upon the purposes of a world league as advocated by the various conferences of representatives of labor.

Mr. Wilson, in reporting the draft covenant to the Conference, said:

> "It is not in contemplation that this should be merely a league to secure the peace of the world. It is a league which can be used for cooperation in any international matter. That is the significance of the provision introduced concerning labor. There are many ameliorations of labor conditions which can be effected by conference and discussion."

The provision thus referred to is Article XX of the Covenant, which reads as follows:

> "The high contracting parties will endeavor to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labor for men, women and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their industrial and commercial relations extend; and to that end agree to establish as part of the organization of the League a permanent Bureau of Labor." (*a*)

Lord Robert Cecil, after stating that the problem before the Conference was to devise some really effective means of preserving the peace of the world consistent with the least possible interference with national sovereignty, said:

> "I do not regard the clause which deals with labor as any such interference, for it is quite certain that no real progress in ameliorating the condition of labor can be hoped for except by international agreement. Therefore, although the conditions of labor in a country are a matter of internal concern, yet, under the conditions under which we now live that is not so in truth, and bad conditions of labor in one country operate with fatal effect in depressing conditions of labor in another."

(*a*) In the amended Covenant adopted April 28th this Article is revised and amplified to read as follows:

ARTICLE XXIII.

Subject to and in accordance with the provisions of international conventions existing or hereafter to be agreed upon, the members of the League (*a*) will endeavor to secure and maintain fair and humane conditions of labor for men, women and children, both in their own countries and in all countries to which their commercial and industrial relations extend, and for that purpose will establish and maintain the necessary international organizations; (*b*) undertake to secure just treatment of the native inhabitants of territories under their control; (*c*) will entrust the League with the general supervision over the execution of agreements with regard to the traffic in women and children, and the traffic in opium and other dangerous drugs; (*d*) will entrust the League with the general supervision of the trade in arms and ammunition with the countries in which the control to this traffic is necessary in the common interest; (*e*) will make provision to secure and maintain freedom of communication and of transit and equitable treatment for the commerce of all members of the League. In this connection the special necessities of the regions devastated during the war of 1914-1918 shall be in mind; (*f*) will endeavor to take steps in matters of international concern for the prevention and control of disease.

Mr. Barnes' interpretation of the article ran beyond the limitations of its language to an expression of his hope of what might be accomplished under it.

> "I gladly note the insertion of a clause providing for the formation of international charters of labor," he said. "Hitherto, nations have endeavored to protect themselves against low-paid labor by the imposition of tariff barriers. I hope we shall, in the future, under the authority of the League of Nations, seek and find a better way of abolishing low-paid labor altogether. We hope to raise life and labor from the mere struggle for bread on to higher levels of justice and humanity." (*b*)

In its general form and scope, Article XX of the Peace Covenant as originally reported was more in accord with the organization of the International Association for Labor Legislation than any of the other forms of league or association suggested for the consideration of the conferees. That association was formed in 1900, to serve as a means of communication between those who in different industrial countries considered protective labor legislation necessary, and to organize an international labor bureau whose mission should be to publish in French, German and English a periodical collection of

(*b*) Article XXIII of the revised Covenant seeks to give practical effect to the sentiments expressed by Mr. Barnes, and, adopted after the report of the Commission on Labor Conditions, pledges the powers to furnish the machinery for putting into practical application the recommendations made in that report.

labor legislation in all countries or to lend its aid to a similar publication.

But while the labor provision in the Constitution of the League of Nations was limited to the simple outlines above quoted, another far more complicated and more far-reaching plan of international machinery has been in the making by a different, but associated, official agency. (*c*)

On January 25, 1919, the Peace Conference at Paris, among other subsidiary committees and commissions, created a Commission on International Labor Legislation, consisting of two representatives of each of the five great powers and five representatives of the other powers, charged with the duty

> "to inquire into the conditions of employment from an international aspect and to consider the international means necessary to secure common action on matters affecting conditions of employment, and to recommend the form of a permanent agency to continue such inquiry and consideration in cooperation with and under the direction of the League of Nations."

The representatives of the United States on that Commission were Mr. Hurley, President of the American Shipping Board, and Mr. Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor (with two substitutes, viz.: Mr. H. M. Robinson and Dr. J. T. Shotwell). Mr. Gompers was later elected Chairman of the Commission. The report recently submitted by the Commission and

(*c*) The adoption of the report of the Commission on International Labor Legislation made necessary a change in the Labor Article of the Covenant which was expanded into Article XXIII, quoted in note (*b*) above. That report provided for the establishment of a Labor Bureau, and other machinery to carry out the mutual agreements of the revised Article, so it was unnecessary to include a provision for it in the Covenant.

unanimously adopted by the Peace Conference, recommends the adoption of a proposed treaty between all the powers members of the League of Nations, creating a permanent organization for the promotion of the international regulation of labor conditions. It proposes to make participation in this organization a condition of membership in the League. It proposes conferences to be held at least annually, consisting of delegates nominated by each of the powers; but in order to insure the character of representation, it is provided that each government shall send four delegates, two of whom shall be directly appointed by the government and the other two chosen in agreement with the industrial organizations representative of their employers and work-people, respectively. Each delegate may be accompanied by advisers, not exceeding two in number for each item on the *agenda* of the meeting, and when questions especially affecting women are to be considered by the conference, one at least of the advisers should be a woman. Each of the delegates is to vote individually, the theory being that if the conferences are really to be representative of all concerned with industry and to command their confidence, the employers and work-people must be allowed to express their views with complete frankness and freedom, and that the employers' and work-people's delegates should be entitled to speak and vote independently of their governments. The organization is to function principally through an International Labor Office, under the control of a governing body of twenty-four members, to be constituted as follows:

Twelve representatives of the governments, six members elected by the delegates to the conferences representing the employers, and six members elected by the delegates representing the work-people. Of the twelve mem-

bers representing the governments, eight shall be nominated by the powers which are of chief industrial importance, and four by the powers selected for that purpose by the government delegates to the conference, excluding the delegates of the eight states above mentioned; the question as to which are the powers of chief industrial importance to be decided by the Executive Council of the League of Nations. The members of the governing board are to hold office for three years.

The functions of the International Labor Office, include the collection and distribution of information on all subjects relating to the adjustment of international conditions of industrial life and labor, and particularly the examination of subjects which it is proposed to bring before the conference with a view to the conclusion of international conventions, and the conduct of such special investigations as may be ordered by the conference. It is to prepare the *agenda* or programme for all meetings of the conference; and to edit and publish a periodical paper in the French and English languages and in such other languages as the governing body may think desirable, dealing with problems of industrial employment of international interest. The expenses of maintaining this international labor organization are to come from the general funds of the League of Nations. There are elaborate provisions as to what shall or shall not be included in the *agenda* to be discussed at the periodical conferences. When the conference has decided upon the adoption of proposals with regard to an item in the *agenda,* it is to rest with that conference to determine whether or not those proposals shall take the form: (*a*) of a recommendation to be submitted to the high contracting parties for consideration with a view to their being given effect by national legislation, or otherwise, or (*b*) of a draft international convention for ratification by the high contracting parties. In either case, a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast by the delegates present is required on the final vote for the adoption of a recommendation or draft convention, as the case may be, by the conference. Each of the contracting parties agrees within the period of one year after the conference to bring the recommendation or draft before the authority or authorities within whose competence the matter lies, for the enactment of legislation, or other action. It is also provided that in the case of a federal state, the power of which to enter into conventions on labor matters is subject to limitations, it shall be in the discretion of the government of such state to treat a draft convention to which such limitations apply as a recommendation only. Machinery is provided whereby a state which fails to carry out its obligations, or to enforce a convention which has been ratified, may be subjected to economic measures, to compel it to do so. Thus, if a complaint be made to the International Labor Office by an industrial organization of employers or work-people, that any of the contracting powers has failed to secure in any respect the effective observance within its jurisdiction of any convention to which it is a party, the governing body may communicate this representation to the state against which it is made, inviting such statement on the subject as that state may think fit. If none is received within a reasonable time, or if, when received, it is not deemed satisfactory by the governing body, the latter shall have the right to publish the representation and the statement, if any. Any of the powers party to the treaty also is to have the right to file a complaint with the International Labor Office, if it is not satisfied that any other party is securing the effective

observance of a ratified convention. The governing body in its discretion may either communicate such complaint to the state against which it is made, or apply for the appointment of a commission of inquiry to consider the complaint and report thereon. In the latter event, the commission of inquiry is to be constituted as follows:

Each of the high contracting parties agrees to nominate, within six months of the date on which the convention comes into effect, three persons of industrial experience, one of whom shall be the representative of employers, one of work-people, and one a person of independent standing. These nominees together shall form a panel from which the members of any commission of inquiry shall be drawn. The qualifications of the persons so nominated are to be subject to scrutiny by the governing body, which, by two-thirds of the votes cast by the members present, may refuse to accept the nomination of any person whose qualifications, in its opinion, do not comply with the requirements of the article. On application of the governing body, the Secretary-General of the League shall nominate three persons, one from each section of the panel, to constitute the commission of inquiry, designating one of them as president of the commission. The high contracting parties agree to place at the disposal of the commission all information in their possession bearing upon the subject-matter of the complaint. The commission shall make a report embodying its findings of fact and recommendations and shall indicate the measures, if any, of an economic character against a defaulting state which it considers to be appropriate and which the other states would be justified in adopting, which report shall be communicated by the Secretary-General of the League of Nations to each of the states concerned, and published. Every state so affected, within

one month after the receipt of such report, shall inform the Secretary-General whether or not it accepts the recommendations of the commission, and if not, whether it proposes to refer the complaint to the permanent court of international justice of the League of Nations. If any state shall fail, within the specified time, to take action as above mentioned, any other of the states parties to the compact, shall be entitled to refer the matter to the permanent court, and the decision of that court shall be final. The permanent court may affirm, vary, or reverse any of the findings or recommendations of the commission of inquiry, and shall indicate in its decision the measures, if any, of an economic character against a defaulting state which it considers to be appropriate and which other states would be justified in adopting, and in the event of any state failing to carry out, within the time specified, the recommendations, if any, contained in the report of the commission of inquiry, or the decision of the permanent court, as the case may be, any other state may take, as against that state, the economic measures indicated in the report or decision. It is further provided that in no case shall any nation be asked or required, as a result of the adoption of any recommendation or draft convention by the conference, to diminish the protection afforded by its existing legislation to the workers concerned.

The proposed convention is made extraordinarily difficult of amendment. Amendments must first be adopted by the conference by two-thirds of the votes cast by the delegates present, and then ratified by the states whose representatives compose the Executive Council of the League of Nations, and also by three-fourths of the states whose representatives compose the Body of Delegates of the League.

In view of the novelty of the entire scheme, it would seem that it were wiser to make the plan more flexible by facilitating rather than preventing amendment. Any question of dispute relating to the interpretation of the convention, or any subsequent convention concluded by the parties pursuant to the provisions of this convention, is to be referred for decision to the permanent court of international justice. Pending the creation of such a court, disputes which, in accordance with the convention, should be submitted to it for decision, are to be referred to a tribunal of three persons appointed by the Executive Council of the League of Nations.

The first meeting of the conference is appointed to be held at Washington, D. C., in October, 1919. The Commission itself has prepared and published the *agenda* for that meeting. The subjects thus determined upon for discussion are the following:

1. Application of the principle of an eight-hour day or forty-eight-hour week.
2. Question of preventing or providing against unemployment.
3. Women's employment.
   a. Before and after childbirth, including question of maternity benefit. b. During the night. c. In unhealthy processes.
4. Employment of children.
   a. Minimum age of employment. b. During the night. c. In unhealthy processes.
5. Extension and application of the international conventions adopted at Berne in 1906 on the prohibition of night work for women employed in industry and

the employment or use of white phosphorus in the manufacture of matches.

Besides reporting the proposed treaty or convention, the Commission adopted a resolution expressing the hope that as soon as possible an agreement should be arrived at between the high contracting parties with a view to endowing

> "the international labor conference, under the auspices of the League of Nations, with power to take, under conditions to be determined, resolutions possessing the force of international law."

The Commission further reported that its members are unanimous in thinking that their work would not be completed if it were simply confined to setting up permanent machinery for international labor legislation. While it was not within their province, or within their terms of reference, to deal with specific questions relating to industrial conditions and to work them out with the detail necessary for the framing of proposals which could be accepted in binding form, nevertheless, they were so impressed with the urgent need for recognizing certain fundamental principles as necessary to social progress, that they decided to submit a series of declarations for insertion in the peace treaty. These recommendations they have made merely in general form, some recommended by a majority, some unanimously, which are to be submitted to the high contracting parties for their consideration. They do not ask the high contracting parties to give immediate effect to these principles, but only to endorse them generally It will be the duty of The International Labor Conference to examine them thoroughly and to put them in the form of recommendations

or draft conventions elaborated with the detail necessary for their practical application. The recommendations are as follows:

"1. In right and in fact the labour of a human being should not be treated as merchandise or an article of commerce.

"2. Employers and workers should be allowed the right of association for all lawful purposes.

"3. No child should be permitted to be employed in industry or commerce before the age of fourteen years. In order that every child may be ensured reasonable opportunities for mental and physical education, between the years of fourteen and eighteen, young persons of either sex may only be employed on work which is not harmful to their physical development and on condition that the continuation of their technical or general education is ensured.

"4. Every worker has a right to a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life having regard to the civilization of his time and country.

"5. Equal pay should be given to women and to men for work of equal value in quantity and quality.

"6. A weekly rest, including Sunday, or its equivalent for all workers.

"7. Limitation of the hours of work in industry on the basis of eight hours a day or forty-eight hours a week, subject to an exception for countries in which climatic conditions, the imperfect development of industrial development or industrial organization or other special circumstances render the industrial efficiency of the workers substantially different.

"The International Labour Conference will recommend a basis approximately equivalent to the above for adoption in such countries.

"8. In all matters concerning their status as workers and social insurance, foreign workmen lawfully admitted to any country and their families, should be ensured the same treatment as the nationals of that country.

"9. All States should institute a system of inspection in which women should take part, in order to ensure the enforcement of the laws and regulations for the protection of the workers."

Very useful progress may be made by the acceptance of this programme for discussion at the Washington meeting. Debate by delegates from all these countries of such subjects as those suggested by the Commission must be of great value in forming public opinion and inducing intelligent and wise legislative action. As Mr. Mackenzie King, the Canadian Minister of Labor, recently pointed out, there are four parties to industry: Labor, capital, management and the community. The problem of the right adjustment of the interests of neither one of these can be determined without regard to the others. It has seemed at times that the interests of the community at large more sorely than any other need representation and protection from the consequences of industrial disputes. If the machinery devised by the Paris Conference shall accomplish the end of creating a medium for the discussion and clarifying of thought upon these vital subjects, which shall command the confidence of all parties affected, it will have rendered a conspicuous service to mankind.

It has not yet been announced from Paris whether it is proposed to submit the convention recommended by the Commission on International Labor Legislation as a sepa-

rate treaty, or as a part of the Covenant establishing the League of Nations, or as a part of the general peace treaty. It should be considered on its own merits, separately from both the general peace treaty and the Covenant establishing the League of Nations, because, while it is intertwined with the provisions for the League of Nations, it is susceptible of separate treatment, and some of its provisions ought to receive most careful consideration on the part of Congress before it is adopted.

But on the whole, I think no one can read the proposed convention without being struck with the care, the restraint and the balance with which it has been prepared. The whole scheme is a notable advance in the consideration of questions affecting working-men, women and children in all lands, and promises, if carefully considered and wisely administered, a very marked and very notable improvement in the civilization of the world, so far as it affects those people upon whom fall the greatest brunt of the world's burdens.

I have felt, personally, that if this war came to an end and we returned to our pre-war occupations without having accomplished some tangible, definite step forward, some step which promises to secure the peace of the world as long as it is possible to preserve it, every living man and woman in this generation would be derelict to his sacred duty.

I also feel that unless something be done towards extending the benefits of our civilization—the better protection of life, liberty and property, to those who are most defenseless—again we would fail to perform the duty which is laid upon this generation. We must consecrate the victory that has been won to the advancement of the interests of mankind, and we must do it by sacrificing something of our own preconceived notions and of our own selfish concerns, to the general welfare of mankind.

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